

Central Intelligence Agency

Approved For Release 2004/03/15 : CIA-RDP80M00165A001800080012-5

Washington, D.C. 20505

21 December 1977

The Honorable William L. Scott  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Scott:

I have your communication of 5 December forwarding a letter from your constituent, [redacted] who requests clarification of the necessity for the personnel cuts I have ordered within the CIA.

STAT

Let me assure you that the intention in making this cut was only to strengthen our intelligence collection capabilities. Basically, the facts are that it has long been adjudged that the Operations section of the CIA has been overstaffed. This leads to oversupervision and underutilization of our people. It can be very demotivating to individuals and can create bureaucratic roadblocks to effective actions. Thus, although it was not a pleasant task, I elected to eliminate 820 positions over the next two years.

Please note that all but 13 of the positions selected for elimination will be from our Headquarters staff; thus what we are doing is getting at the overhead, not the operating arm of the CIA.

I am enclosing a statement which more fully explains the background of the cuts I have ordered. I shall be glad to answer any further questions you wish to address to me on this subject.

Yours sincerely,



STANSFIELD TURNER

Enclosure

- Distribution:
- Original - Addressee w/encl
  - 1 - Acting DDCI w/encl
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OLC:DFM:nms (retyped 17 Dec 77)

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THE DIRECTOR  
Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington, D. C. 20505

Executive Registry

77-10760

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OLC 77-5399/a

Honorable William L. Scott  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Scott:

I have your communication of 5 December forwarding a letter from your constituent, [redacted] who requests clarification of the necessity for the personnel cuts I have ordered within the CIA.

STAT

I recently briefed the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on this subject, and I suggest that you might wish to confer with the Committee itself on the points I raised. I pointed out on that occasion that it is my conviction that the reductions I have ordered will not, in fact, reduce our clandestine collection capability. For one thing, all but thirteen of the positions selected for elimination will be from our Headquarters staff, not from overseas positions; and for another, it has been recognized by previous Directors as well as myself that the Operations Directorate has had a numerical strength beyond that required for the effective conduct of clandestine operations. It is to correct precisely this surplus that I ordered the current personnel action.

I am enclosing a statement which more fully explains the background of the cuts I have ordered. I shall be glad to answer any further questions you wish to address to me on this subject.

Yours sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

Enclosure

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encl

OLC:DFM:hms (retyped 14 Dec 77)

Statement by Admiral Stansfield Turner,  
Director of Central Intelligence,  
Concerning Personnel Reductions in the  
Directorate of Operations, CIA

I. Why were the cuts necessary?

Soon after my arrival in the Agency last March I began to hear that the Directorate of Operations was overstaffed. It was almost universally perceived within the Agency that the DDO had excess people, resulting in over management and under utilization of talent. Some organizations could tolerate this, but not an organization like the CIA where we are fortunate to have high-quality, dedicated and ambitious people. Nor, from a broader standpoint, is it tolerable to have unnecessary people on the taxpayers' payroll.

At that time the Directorate of Operations was already engaged in a three-phase restructuring and paring down program. I encouraged and received a report on their efforts in mid-July.

II. Determination of the size of the reduction.

The report I received presented a range of opinion as to the extent of the cut that was necessary. I elected to be conservative and take the smallest number of positions for elimination that was suggested--820. This does not mean that either the incumbents of those positions must be released or that 820 people are going to be declared excess to this Directorate. Normal attrition should greatly reduce the number whose services will no longer be needed in the Directorate of Operations. We also must make provision for the continuing hiring of new and young personnel, to ensure the continuing viability of the service and we also must ensure that there exists a reasonable promotion opportunity at all levels for those on duty. To accomplish these latter points I have told the Directorate of Operations to hire 215 people each year for FY 78 and FY 79. Because of normal attrition many people will be voluntarily leaving the Operations Directorate and we estimate that over the two-year exercise approximately 300 individuals will actually be involuntarily separated from the Agency. It should also be noted that nearly 70 percent of the 212 people declared excess so far are eligible for an immediate retirement annuity.

I feel very strongly that, despite the additional pain it causes us, we cannot afford to neglect either the promotion opportunity for those already in the organization or the necessity of bringing in people in approximately equal annual increments at the bottom. We simply must continue to build a sufficiently attractive career opportunity to attract and retain the same caliber of people in 1987 as we had in 1977. Parenthetically, I might say that "at the bottom" is intended to mean just that. I see little prospect for more than a handful of specialists coming in at middle or upper levels.

### III. Timing of the reduction.

Of the alternatives presented to me for phasing the reduction, I opted for the quickest, which was accomplishable over a two-year period. Given the changes the last few years have brought to the CIA, I felt it would be better for morale not to prolong this action. Extending the reduction over a six-year period might have made it possible to achieve the reduction through attrition alone, but that would have left an air of uncertainty hanging over the entire organization for that long period and in the end might not have brought about the reductions in the right places. In addition, I do not believe I could honestly face your Committee in its budgetary role and suggest that the Agency should retain such a considerable number of people in excess of its needs for six years.

On August 8 I announced this intended reduction -- first privately to the employees and then publicly to the media. It was in turn well publicized in and outside the Agency. I further announced that we would notify those who were going to be asked to leave in Fiscal Year 1978 not later than the first of November 1977; that none of those persons would be asked to leave prior to the first of March 1978. Those being asked to leave in Fiscal Year 1979 would be notified by 1 June 1978 and not required to leave prior to 1 October 1978.

Between the time I notified CIA employees in August that there would be a reduction, and the first announcement to individuals on the first of November

as to who would be released, I received no complaints either as to the necessity for cuts or how they would be effected. Even since the announcement of who would be released, I have found no one in the Agency who seriously believes that a reduction is not in order.

IV. Who is to be released?

In deciding how to allocate the reduction across grades and skills, my end objective has always been to maintain at least as much clandestine intelligence capability as we possess today. We do not have a surplus of human intelligence collection capability, hence, there will be no meaningful reduction in overseas strength or activities, nor appreciable reduction in the size of the officer operational corps.

V. Method of selecting the individuals.

For those below the supergrade level, the individual's accumulated fitness reports were the basic determinants of who was to leave. The Agency's periodic evaluation boards numerically rank individuals within each grade level. These rankings combined with fitness reports were the basis for a point system. An explicit explanation of this point system was published for all personnel in the Operations Directorate in early October. Beyond this mechanical evaluation, a panel reviewed the calculations and used good judgment in making exceptions where unique skills needed to be retained. These were rare exceptions, however, and the rule of the numerical ranking was closely followed.

In June this year we initiated an annual process by which a senior panel composed of officers at the Executive position level rank all supergrades. The Director for Operations used these rankings as the basis for his recommendations on release of supergrades to me. Again, there were exceptions to the ranking order, but they were rare.

There are two additional points that I would like to make on these selections:

- As far as I can determine, there was no bias by type of service, agreement with current management, race or sex in the selection of these individuals. There were, for example, only 17 women, 4 blacks, and 3 Hispanics in the total of 212 forced reductions for Fiscal 1978.
- There is no question that we were forced to terminate some very capable people. The Directorate of Operations has been shrinking continually since our withdrawal from Vietnam. The majority of the marginal performers have already been eliminated. There is no way today to reduce further without asking very competent people to leave. This is unpleasant, unfortunate, but I believe necessary!

VI. Style of notification.

The method by which notifications were issued to individuals has been criticized. I regret that individuals may have been offended or felt that their prior service was not fully appreciated. Such is not the case. Everyone of these individuals has made sacrifices and many have endured privations and risks for their country. Being fully cognizant of their past contributions, we are determining whether any of these 212 people can be relocated in other directorates within the Agency to fill existing vacancies. Consequently, while individuals have received a notification that their release has been recommended, we are still exploring alternative employment possibilities. Until those alternatives have been exhausted, no final determination on their employment will be made.

I anticipate that 25% of these 212 people will be offered alternative positions. Additionally, I am personally approaching the chiefs of all the

other intelligence services of our country to ask that they give the residual of these 212 special consideration in their hiring requirements.

Finally, in a few cases, notices went to those who would be able to retire if permitted to serve a small amount of additional time. In these cases, we have arranged that no one will be forced to retire before the end of Fiscal Year 1979, when the program must be complete, if he would qualify for retirement by that time.

VII. Is there a security risk?

It has been suggested that the departure of sizable numbers of employees risks their being suborned by enemy intelligence agents. Frankly, I have too much confidence in their loyalty and dedication to take such a suggestion seriously. There was no such experience, to the best of my knowledge, under former Director James Schlesinger in 1973, when 632 employees were separated. Our unfortunate experiences with former employees violating their secrecy agreement have come entirely from individuals who have left the Agency of their own volition.

VIII. Next phase of the reduction.

The Fiscal 1979 cut will require approximately the same number of reductions, perhaps more if attrition does not meet expectations. We intend not to wait until the first of June and then send out all of the notifications at once but to commence notification as early as possible. None will be required to depart before the first of October 1978.

XI. Conclusions.

Many are concerned that this reduction may have hurt the morale of the Directorate of Operations. There is no question that in the short-term it has. The long-term objective, however, is quite the reverse; it is to rebuild morale by ensuring operational efficiency and full utilization of talent. More than that, morale in the Directorate of Operations will be further strengthened through the

sustained expression of support for its vital activities such as has come from this Committee and which also must come from a broader range of citizens. We must lift the pall of suspicion which hangs over the Intelligence Community in general and the Central Intelligence Agency in particular, which obscures the exceptional contribution these organizations have made in the past and are making today.

I would not have encouraged and approved this sizable reduction had I not thought that in the long run it would strengthen the Directorate of Operations and the Central Intelligence Agency. We need the capabilities of this Directorate as much today as ever. Although new technical means of collection permit us to extend our collection efforts, they only compliment, they do not supersede human collectors. Only human collectors can gain access to motives, to intentions, to thoughts, and plans. They will always be vital to our country's security.

It would have been much easier for me to have avoided this issue and attempted to continue over strength until you or the appropriations committees or the Office of Management and Budget uncovered these excesses and made the reductions in my behalf. Contrary to media reports, I was not directed to make these cuts either by the Vice President or David Aaron of the National Security Council staff as reported in some media. I have talked to neither on the subject except to keep the Vice President informed of my decisions. In sum, it is my opinion that I would have been avoiding my duty and would have been placing short-term considerations ahead of long-term necessities in putting the cuts off. We simply must build a foundation today for a Central Intelligence Agency that will be capable of continuing into the indefinite future the outstanding performance it has given our country during the past thirty years.

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
Routing Slip

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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Remarks:

*As per DCI response*

Executive Secretary  
*7 Dec*  
Date

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WILLIAM L. SCOTT  
VIRGINIA

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COMMITTEES:  
ARMED SERVICES  
JUDICIARY

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

Executive Registry
77-10546

*read 7 Dec*

December 5, 1977

Admiral Stansfield Turner  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

Enclosed is a letter from a constituent,

and a copy of the article by Patrick J. Buchanan entitled THE PRESIDENT'S QUIET PURGE OF THE CIA.

As you will note, [redacted] is seeking, among other things, the reasoning behind the decision to separate these individuals.

Your comments, consistent with existing rules and regulations governing the CIA, will be appreciated.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

*William L. Scott*  
William L. Scott, U.S.S.

WLS/dh

Enclosures

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE)

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## The President's Quiet Purge of the CIA

WASHINGTON — "If the satellites are blinded, what have we got?" Thus did Defense Secretary Harold Brown express his public concern with Soviet testing of hunter-killer satellites — designed to poke out America's eyes in inner space.

Upon our satellites the United States depends for knowledge of troop movements and naval operations, of strategic weapons, testing and deployment.

That the Russians, moving inexorably toward a first strike capability, should be developing the means to destroy U.S. space vehicles is understandable. What is inexplicable is that, with the apparent blessing of the president, the United States is rendering itself partially blind and partially deaf in the global arena.

At the CIA, a sweeping purge is being conducted by the Directorate of Operations,

the clandestine services which deal with espionage and counterespionage. CIA Director Stansfield Turner has scheduled some 800-plus personnel for severance from the elite corps over the next two years — a number representing at least 20 per cent of the service.

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YET MORE THAN numbers are at stake. Many of those being severed are among the most experienced and able men in the agency, including senior officers and station chiefs in some of the most crucial posts in Europe. Together, these men represent thousands of man-years of invaluable intelligence experience and irreplaceable contacts and confidences built up over long careers. When the purge is complete, part of the institutional memory of the CIA will

be permanently destroyed.

An estimated 200 members of the clandestine services have already received a memo that can fairly be described in Hobbes' words as "nasty, brutish and short."

"Subject: Notification of intent to recommend separation.

"This is to inform you of my intent to recommend to the director of personnel your separation . . . in order to achieve the reduction in the operational strength ordered by the DCI [Turner]."

This is the heart of the 70-word Haldermanic message sent scores of veterans of the silent service. In a gracious parting gesture, the CIA has told the veterans that those who sever themselves by year's end will not have this brutal discharge note placed in their permanent file. Those who refuse to go quietly will be unceremoniously dispatched by spring.

Though the missive was signed by Director of Operations William Welles, it is reportedly not his handiwork. Turner and his trigger man, Special Assistant Robert D. "Rusty" Williams, are said to be carrying out the purge at the behest of David Aaron of the National Security Council, one-time staffer on the CIA-baiting Church committee, and Walter Mondale, whom Carter has charged with oversight of the intelligence community "reform."

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IN THIS DANGEROUS period of the Cold War we have chosen to call "détente," the decapitation of the clandestine services is a reckless form of false economy.

During a Middle East war, as in 1973, our satellites may be able to tell us that Soviet airborne divisions are being moved toward military air fields. But only human sources can tell us if Brezhnev is serious about intervention or is running a bluff. Gadgets can tell us about Russian capability; only human beings can tell us about motivation and intent.

Of passing interest is that this sweeping purge is being conducted to the indifference of the national press. If those 200 men, however, got their walking papers from the Peace Corps, the networks and national press would be ablaze with indignation.

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Special Features

November 21, 1977

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Senator Scott -

The Richmond Times Dispatch carried the enclosed editorial on the CIA purge of 200 members of the clandestine services, while I don't pretend to be a authority on clandestine personnel or operations, this sounds like a questionable decision to limit our capabilities in this area of intelligence.

I would be interested in your thoughts on this issue as well as the reasoning behind such a decision.

Sincerely,

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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*William L. Scott*

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Admiral Stansfield Turner  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
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